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Joan Claybrook, President

July 3, 2001

Lake Barrett
Acting Director
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Mr. Barrett:

In reference to your letter dated June 15, 2001, this letter concerns the public comment period for the *Supplement to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (Supplemental Draft EIS). We urge you to unify the new deadlines for public comment by further extending the general comment period until *at least* August 13, 2001.

The Secretary of Energy's decision to extend the comment period by only eleven days fails to address our concerns about the limited possibilities for meaningful public participation. Compounding this serious problem is the additional 45-day extension granted exclusively to individuals erroneously omitted from the Department of Energy's (DOE) mailing list in May. This situation is not only confusing, but also inequitable. Other concerned members of the public who are not on the DOE's mailing list and have only recently accessed the document(s) have not been afforded the same extension. Also, since it is likely that some of the people originally omitted from the DOE's mailing list found other ways to acquire the document before it was mailed to them on June 25th, the selective extension arbitrarily grants these individuals the benefit of a longer comment period, while denying the same to other interested stakeholders.

Given the national significance of the Yucca Mountain Project, public participation must be taken seriously and processes must be conducted with integrity. Unless corrected, the unacceptably short comment period, incongruous deadlines, and general lack of transparency over the Supplement Draft EIS will further erode public confidence in the Department of Energy's Yucca Mountain Project activities.

Sincerely,

Wenonah Hauter
Director,
Public Citizen's Critical Mass Energy and Environment Program

Ralph Nader, Founder

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